

Annex 4: Guidance on Crisis Management²

The purpose of this document on crisis management is to ensure a successful mobility experience for all parties involved. The annex provides information on what constitutes a crisis (chapter 1), who should be involved in preventing and managing a crisis (chapter 2), how to prevent the crisis from happening (chapter 3) and how to handle crises and ensure that pupils involved, responsible teachers, host families and parents/legal representatives have a common framework of reference in such an event (chapter 4). It should also ensure that a crisis will be dealt with effectively and will not escalate.

The present document *Guidance on Crisis Management* should be distributed to all those involved in a mobility – the mentor(s) at the host school, the Mobility Coordinators, the host family, the visiting pupil and their parent(s)/legal representatives(s). The Mobility Coordinator of the host school will ensure that all these parties have each other's contact details to enable prompt communication in the event of a crisis.

All parties should be aware that any sensitive information concerning the pupil must be kept confidential and can only be disclosed when needed to those who are directly involved in dealing with the crisis.

1. What is a crisis?

A crisis can be defined as an extreme situation which would lead to a serious disturbance of the mobility, and which requires urgent action. Crises should be distinguished from problems, which are not extreme, and which do not require immediate action. However, problems can develop into crises if not correctly handled.

Crises call for urgent action, but should, as far as possible, be prevented. It is at least as important to work on risk prevention as on crisis management. Despite all preventive measures, crises might happen. In that case, it is essential that all the parties involved know how to react and whom to contact.

The following list of extreme situations which could happen during a mobility is not exhaustive but may help illustrate various problems and solution scenarios.

- Medical problems:
 - serious illness or allergy
 - serious injuries
 - accidents (e.g. traffic accident)
 - unwanted pregnancy
- Psychological problems:
 - depression
 - psychological consequences of suffering violence
 - problems related to abuse of alcohol or drugs
 - eating disorders
- Mental and/or physical abuse of the pupil:
 - sexual/physical abuse
 - bullying
 - racism/xenophobia
 - living in a host family and/or area where living conditions are not healthy or are

² The content of this form is adapted from the European Voluntary Service crisis manual.

insecure for the pupil involved

- Death of the pupil
- Being a victim of a crime
- Breaches of the rules of conduct and legal problems caused by the pupil:
 - risk behaviour
 - the pupil goes missing
 - police arrest or detention
 - violent behaviour
 - theft
 - abuse of alcohol or usage of drugs
- Other:
 - family pressure to return home
 - death/serious illness of a family member
 - conflicts with the host family
 - conflicts with the mentor

2. Who must be involved in preventing and managing a crisis?

The mentor and the host family have a key role in crisis prevention and management during the pupil's stay in their country. Their efficient collaboration and communication are crucial in preventing and managing crises.

The mentor needs to build a supportive relationship with the pupil. This can happen thanks to regular, frequent and face-to-face contact. The mentor should be available to deal with any matters that the pupil or host family would like to raise and be easy to reach in case of emergency. A replacement person for the mentor should be nominated in case the mentor is absent or unable to perform their tasks. The school must make sure that the pupil can always contact somebody in case of emergency. The pupil must be provided with the phone numbers of all individuals involved in their mobility programme to ensure they can call if necessary.

The host family acts as the actual parent or legal representative would do. The host family should establish smooth and efficient communication with the pupil and the mentor.

If the pupil shows signs of serious difficulties (e.g. serious personal problems or difficulty in adapting to the host country) the mentor and the host family must act quickly to prevent any dangerous situation. This may require more intense counselling of the pupil or helping them to overcome emotional challenges. However, both the mentor and the host family should seek expert help if the pupil shows signs of serious difficulties and not try to solve them on their own. The mentor and the host family should look out for any signs that the pupil is feeling uncomfortable and should encourage them to speak honestly about their feelings.

An overview of the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved is listed in *Annex 1: Roles and Responsibilities*.

3. How to prevent crisis situations?

- The recruitment and selection of pupils should follow the guidelines.
- The mentors must understand and perform their tasks.
- The correct identification of a host family is one of the key elements in preventing crises.

- Pupils and Mobility Coordinators at the sending school must attend the pre-departure info-session organized by the sending school.
- Pupils and mentors at the host school must attend the on-arrival info-session organized by the host school.
- Pupils must know and observe the rules of conduct of the host school.
- Pupils should also know and observe the law in the host country (info provided by the host school).
- Pupils must always know in advance the persons they can turn to in case of problems. In principle, these should be the mentor and the host family. Contact details of these persons have been provided to the pupil by the host school.
- Parents/legal representatives of the pupil must make the necessary arrangements to ensure that the pupil does not travel alone from/to the airport/railway station/other to/from the home of the host family.
- All parties must abide by their roles and responsibilities outlined in Annex 1.

4. How to manage crisis situations?

4.1. Communication of key crisis contact details

The Mobility Coordinator at the host school will ensure that prior to the pupil's arrival all those involved in the mobility, including host family, mentor, sending school, parent(s)/legal representative(s) and pupil, have each other's contact details to enable prompt communication in the event of a crisis.

4.2. Basic emergency procedure

Basic procedure to be followed in case of crisis:

- The first action to solve the situation must be taken by the mentor or the host family, depending on who is informed first (i.e. calling emergency, expert help).
- The host family/the mentor immediately inform each other about what happened, and the pupil's parent(s)/legal representative(s) must be notified as soon as possible.
- If the mentor and the host family are not able or competent to solve the pupil's problem at local level, they should contact the Management of the host school for help and advice.
- The mentor contacts the pupil's parent(s)/legal representative(s).
- After a crisis, the pupil's wish to continue the mobility should be respected, except in cases where the pupil's behaviour has already made it unlikely that the stay will be successful.
- In very urgent cases, the mentor can propose to terminate the pupil's mobility. However, they should consult with the Management of the host school, which will finally decide.

At the end of the crisis, a detailed report should be produced by the mentor, summarizing the circumstances and consequences of the case, and giving an evaluation of what to do in the future (e.g. recommendations on how to avoid similar situations and on how to act in a similar crisis). This report may be necessary for insurance purposes, legal action or other administrative procedures.

This basic procedure should be applied in any case of emergency. In addition, specific procedures apply to certain types of emergencies, as described below.

4.2.1. Medical emergencies

Medical emergencies can be any situation related to the health and well-being of the pupil.

The basic emergency procedure should be followed as described above. The following documents should be kept together and be available for medical emergencies:

- the *Online Application Form*,
- *Annex 2: Confidential Health Form* (in a sealed envelope)
- a copy of the pupil's European Health Insurance Card³ or of another equivalent health insurance of the pupil (the original stays with the pupil),

The first action must be taken by the mentor, or the host family as explained above. The mentor/host family should be able to quickly collect and provide the following information (all the information must be treated as confidential):

- exact condition and safety of the pupil
- correct name and birth date of the pupil
- symptoms and complications
- treatment already received and given by whom
- documents needed for the health emergency (as stated above)
- In case of death, further facts must be checked:
 - circumstances of death (time, place, event)
 - who has been notified
 - where the body is
 - liaison with police and notification of the embassy concerned, if necessary
 - collection of all medical reports, death certificate and police reports
 - liaison with insurance regarding the return of body and the funeral

4.2.2. Psychological emergencies

This category includes situations that require special psychological treatment/monitoring, such as illness, unwanted pregnancy, psychological consequences of crime, drugs and alcohol abuse, depression, eating disorders, etc. Intervention for problems in this category can either be requested by the pupil themselves or warning signs should be detected by the host family, the mentor, other teachers or fellow pupils.

Where necessary, the mentor, in cooperation with the families, should help to find a qualified person to give psychological support to the pupil, e.g. among the resource persons of the host school.

- If the situation also involves health problems, and in all cases where there is a crisis, the same procedures as for medical emergencies should be started.
- Contact with local specialist institutions is recommended.

4.2.3. In the event of crime committed on the pupil

This category can include situations in which the pupil is a victim of a crime such as violence or theft.

The following procedure should be followed:

- Either the pupil/host family contacts the police immediately, or notifies the mentor, who helps in dealing with the police and insurance issues; if possible, the pupil's parent(s)/legal representative(s) must be notified beforehand.
- If the pupil contacts the police themselves (or if this is done by the host family) the mentor

³ [European Health Insurance Card - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/e0604000-1230-4f60-9050-505f55555555/p128084.pdf)

must be notified as soon as possible.

- The host family and parent(s)/legal representative(s) are informed by the mentor and involved where appropriate.
- The mentor assists the pupil in reporting the case to the relevant authorities.
- The mentor assists the pupil in contacting the medical insurance whenever psychological assistance is needed.

Some of the action in section 4.2.2 *Psychological emergencies* may be necessary for psychological support to the pupil.

4.2.4. Breaches of the rules of conduct and legal problems caused by the pupil

This category can include breaches of the rules of conduct and legal problems caused by the pupil such as violence, drugs and alcohol abuse, accidents or police arrest and detention. The basic emergency procedure (section 4.2) should be applied. The mentor/host family should also be able to:

- Quickly collect the reasons for arrest or charges made.
- Find out whether the pupil has been detained and, if so,
- Find out the details of the police staff involved.
- Liaise with pupil and police.
- Inform the Management of the host school (via the mentor).

In case of a serious breach of rules/laws of the host country, the mentor can propose to terminate the pupil's mobility, after consulting the Management of the host school. The final decision is to the Management of the host school.

4.2.5. Family pressure to return home

- The pupil/the host family tells the mentor that their family would like the pupil to return home.
- The mentor at the host school/Mobility Coordinator at the sending school discuss the reasons with the family.
- Unless the reason is related to serious illness or death in the family, the host school/Mobility Coordinator at the sending school should first try to convince the family that the pupil should continue the mobility.
- If the family still wants the pupil to return home, the mentor and the Management of the host school will terminate the mobility. The travel expenses and all other costs are borne by the pupil's family.

4.2.6. Serious illness/death in the sending family

- The pupil informs the mentor about the serious illness/death in the sending family.
- The mentor contacts the insurance at the dedicated phone number and requests help in arranging a trip home for the pupil. Arrangements that are made and paid for by the mentor/school/host family/pupil without the agreement of the insurance will not be reimbursed.

4.2.7. Serious illness/death in the host family

- A member of the host family informs the mentor about the serious illness/death in the family.
- The mentor informs the sending family and discusses with school management the impact

on the mobility, searching for an alternative family.

4.2.8. Conflicts with the host family

- The pupil/the host family informs the mentor about the conflict.
- In case of a minor conflict, the mentor tries to mediate.
- In the event of irreconcilable differences between the host family and the pupil, and where mediation has been tried and has not led to an acceptable solution, the body which has helped finding a host family originally will support finding an alternative as soon as possible, however, it is within the responsibility of the parent(s)/legal representative(s) of the pupil to find alternative accommodation, or repatriation of the pupil within a maximum of 3 days.
- In the event of a serious breach of rules by the pupil, the host family can ask for the immediate termination of the pupil's stay and require the parent(s)/legal representative(s) of the pupil to plan for alternative accommodation or repatriation. In case of repatriation, the travel costs will be borne by the parent(s)/legal representative(s) of the pupil.
- In the event of any doubts in relation to a host family and child protection risk issues, the mentor together with the Management of the host school will immediately remove the pupil from the family and try to provide the pupil with an alternative family, with the support of the Parents' Association.

4.2.9. Conflicts with the mentor

- The pupil/the host family/the Mobility Coordinator at the sending school informs the Management of the host school about the problem.
- In case of a minor conflict, the Director tries to mediate.
- In case of irreconcilable conflict or a loss of trust, a new mentor is nominated.